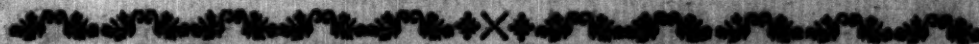




THE
COUNTRY JUSTICE.

A P O E M.

PART THE SECOND.



COUNTY JUSTICE

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BY ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE
PEACE FOR THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET.

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LONDON:

Printed for T. BECKET, the Corner of the ADELPHI,
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ROBERT WILSON CRACROFT, Esq.

BORN with a gentle Heart, and born to please
With native Goodness, of no Fortune vain,
The social Aspect of inviting Ease,
The kind Opinion, and the Sense humane;
To Thee, my CRACROFT, whom, in early Youth,
With lenient Hand, and anxious Love I led
Thro' Paths where Science points to manly Truth,
And Glory gilds the Mansions of the Dead:

B

To

To Thee this Offering of maturer Thought,
That, since wild FANCY flung the Lyre aside,
With heedful Hand the MORAL MUSE hath wrought,
That Muse devotes, and bears with honest Pride.

Yet not that Period of the human Year,
When FANCY reign'd, shall we with Pain review;
All NATURE's Seasons different Aspects wear,
And now her Flowers, and now her Fruits are due.

Not that in Youth we rang'd the smiling Meads,
On Essex' Shores the trembling Angle play'd,
Urging at Noon the flow Boat in the Reeds,
That wav'd their green Uncertainty of Shade.

Nor

DEDICATION.

vii

Nor yet the Days consum'd in HACKTHORN'S Vale,
That lonely on the Heath's wild Bosom lies,
Should we with stern Severity bewail,
And all the *lighter* Hours of Life despise.

For Nature's Seasons different Aspects wear,
And now her Flowers, and now her Fruits are due;
Awhile she freed us from the Scourge of CARE,
But told us *then*--- for social Ends we grew.

To find some Virtue trac'd on Life's short Page,
Some Mark of Service paid to human Kind,
Alone can chear the wintry Paths of Age,
Alone support the far-reflecting Mind.

Oh!

Oh! often thought---when SMITH's discerning Care
To further Days prolong'd this failing Frame!
To die, was little--- But what Heart could bear
To die, and leave an undistinguish'd Name?

Blagdon-House,
22 Feb. 1775.

THE

T H E
COUNTRY JUSTICE.

Protection of the Poor.

* **Y**ET, while thy Rod restrains the needy Crew,
Remember that Thou art their Monarch too.
KING OF THE BEGGARS! — Lov'st Thou not the Name?
O, great from GANGES to the golden TAME!
Far-ruling Sovereign of this begging Ball,
Low at thy Footstool other Thrones shall fall.

* Refers to the Conclusion of the First Part.

10 THE COUNTRY JUSTICE.

His Alms to Thee the whisker'd Moor convey *,
 And PRUSSIA's sturdy Beggar own thy Sway ;
 Courts, Senates — all to BAAL that bend the Knee†,
 King of the Beggars, these are Fiefs to Thee !

But still, forgot the Grandeur of thy Reign,
 Descend to Duties meaner Crowns disdain ;
 That worst Excrescency of Power forego,
 That *Pride* of Kings, Humanity's first Foe.

Let Age no longer toil with feeble Strife,
 Worn by long Service in the War of Life ;

* The Mahometan Princes seem to have a regular System of Begging. Nothing so common as to hear that the Dey of Algiers, &c. &c. are dissatisfied with their Presents. It must be owned, it would be for the Welfare of the World, if Princes in general would adhere to the Maxim, that, *it is better to beg than to steal.*

† ——— Tu poscis vilia rerum,
 Quamvis fers te nullius egentem. *Hor.*

THE COUNTRY JUSTICE.

11

Nor leave the Head, that Time hath whiten'd, bare
To the rude Infults of the searching Air;
Nor bid the Knee, by Labour harden'd, bend,
O Thou, the poor Man's Hope, the poor Man's Friend!

If, when from Heav'n severer Seasons fall,
Fled from the frozen Roof, and mouldering Wall,
Each Face the Picture of a Winter-Day,
More strong than *Teniers*' Pencil could pourtray; —
If then to Thee resort the shivering Train,
Of cruel Days, and cruel Man complain,
Say to thy Heart [remembering Him who said]
These People come from far, and have no Bread.

Nor leave thy venal Clerk empower'd to hear;
The Voice of Want is sacred to *thy* Ear.

He,

He, where no Fees his sordid Pen invite,
Sports with their Tears, too indolent to write;
Like the fed Monkey in the Fable, vain
To hear more helpless Animals complain.

But chief thy Notice shall One Monster claim,
A Monster furnish'd with a human Frame,
The Parish-Officer! — tho' Verse disdain
Terms that deform the Splendor of the Strain;
It stoops to bid Thee bend the Brow severe
On the sly, pilfering, cruel Overseer;
The shuffling Farmer, faithful to no Trust,
Ruthless as Rocks, insatiate as the Dust!

When the poor Hind, with Length of Years decay'd,
Leans feebly on his once subduing Spade,

Forgot

Forgot the Service of his abler Days,
His profitable Toil, and honest Praise,
Shall this low Wretch abridge his scanty Bread,
This Slave, whose Board his former Labours spread?

When Harvest's burning Suns and sickening Air
From Labour's unbrac'd Hand the grasp'd Hook tear,
Where shall the helpless Family be fed,
That vainly languish for a Father's Bread?
See the pale Mother, sunk with Grief and Care,
To the proud Farmer fearfully repair;
Soon to be sent with Insolence away,
Referr'd to Vestries, and a distant Day long gaining
Referr'd—to perish!—Is my verse severe?
Unfriendly to the human Character?
Ah! to this Sigh of sad Experience trust:
The Truth is rigid, but the Tale is just.

D

If

THE COUNTRY JUSTICE.

If in thy Courts this Caitiff Wretch appear,
 Think not, that Patience were a Virtue here.
 His low-born Pride with honest Rage controul;
 Smite his hard Heart; and shake his Reptile Soul.

But, hapless! oft thro' Fear of future Woe,
 And certain Vengeance of th' insulting Foe,
 Oft, ere to Thee the Poor, prefer their Pray'r,
 The last Extremes of Penury they bear.

Wouldst Thou then raise thy Patriot Office higher,
 To something more than Magistrate aspire?
 And, left each poorer, pettier Chace behind,
 So pentbly forth, the Friend of Human Kind?
 The Game I start courageously pursue!
 Adieu to Fear! to Indolence adieu!

And,

And, first we'll range this Mountain's stormy Side,
Where the rude Winds the Shepherd's Roof deride,
As meet no more the wintry Blast to bear,
And all the wild Hostilities of Air.

—That Roof have I remember'd many a Year;

It once gave Refuge to a hunted Deer—

Here, in those Days, we found an aged Pair;—

But TIME untenants—Hah! what seest Thou there?

“Horror!—By Heav'n, extended on a Bed

“Of naked Fearn, two human Creatures dead!

“Embracing as alive!—ah, no!—no Life!

“Cold, breathless!”

’Tis the Shepherd and his Wife.

I knew the Scene, and brought Thee to behold

What speaks more strongly than the story told.

They

They died thro' Want--

"By every Power I swear,

"If the Wretch treads the Earth, or breathes the Air,

"Thro' whose Default of Duty, or Design,

"These Victims fell, he dies."

They fell by thine

"Infernal!—Mine!—by—"

Swear on no Pretence:

A swearing Justice wants both Grace and Sense.

When thy good Father held this wide Domain,

The Voice of Sorrow never mourn'd in vain.

Sooth'd by his Pity, by his Bounty fed,

The Sick found Medicine, and the Aged Bread.

He

THE COUNTRY JUSTICE. 17

He left their Interest to no Parish-Care,
No Bailiff urg'd his little Empire there;
No Village-Tyrant starv'd them, or oppress'd;
He learnt their Wants, and He those Wants redress'd.

Ev'n these, unhappy! who, beheld too late,
Smote thy young Heart with Horror at their Fate,
His Bounty found, and destin'd here to keep
A small Detachment of his Mountain-Sheep.
Still pleas'd to see them from the annual Fair
Th' unwritten History of their Profits bear;
More nobly pleas'd those Profits to restore,
And, if their Fortune fail'd them, make it more.

When Nature gave her Precept to remove
His kindred Spirit to the Realms of Love,
The golden Days of Holiness

18 THE COUNTRY JUSTICE.

Afar their Anguish from thy distant Ear,
No Arm to save; and no Protection near,
Led by the Lure of unaccounted Gold,
Thy Bailiff seiz'd their little Flock, and sold.

Their Want contending Parishes survey'd,
And this disown'd, and that refus'd to aid:
A while, who should succour them, they tried,
And in that while the wretched Victims died.

"I'll scalp that Bailiff—sacrifice."

In vain
To rave at Mischief, if the Cause remain!

O Days long lost to Man in each Degree!
The golden Days of Hospitality!

When

When liberal Fortunes vied with liberal Strife
To fill the noblest Offices of Life ;
When WEALTH was Virtue's Handmaid, and her Gate
Gave a free Refuge from the Wrongs of Fate ;
The Poor at Hand their natural Patrons saw,
And Lawgivers were Supplements of Law !

Loft are those Days, and FASHION's boundless Sway
Has borne the Guardian Magistrate away.
Save in AUGUSTA's Streets, on Gallia's Shore,
The Rural Patron is beheld no more.
No more the Poor his kind Protection share,
Unknown their Wants, and unreceiv'd their Prayer.

Yet has that Fashion, long so light and vain,
Reform'd at last, and led the moral Train?

Have

Have her gay Vot'ries nobler worth to boast
 For NATURE'S LOVE, for NATURE'S Virtue lost?
 No—fled from these, the Sons of Fortune find
 What poor Respect to Wealth remains behind,
 The Mock Regard alone of menial Slaves,
 The worship'd Calves of their outwitting Knaves!

Foregone the social, hospitable Days,
 When wide Vales echoed with their Owner's Praise,
 Of all that *ancient Consequence* bereft,
 What has the *modern Man of Fashion* left?

Does He, perchance, to rural Scenes repair,
 And "waste his Sweetness" on the essenc'd Air?
 Ah! gently lave the feeble Frame He brings,
 Ye scouring Seas! and ye sulphureous Springs!

And

And Thou, Brighthelmstone, where no Cits annoy,
 (All borne to MARGATE, in the Margate-Hoy)
 Where, if the hasty Creditor advance,
 Lies the light Skiff, and ever-bailing France,
 Do Thou defend Him in the Dog-Day-Suns!
 Secure in Winter from the Rage of Duns!

While the grim Catchpole, the grim Porter swear,
 One that He is, and one, He is not there,
 The tortur'd Us'rer, as he murmurs by,
 Eyes the Venetian Blinds, and heaves a Sigh.

O, from each Title Folly ever took,
 Blood! Maccarone! Cicisbeo! or Rook!
 From each low Passion, from each low Resort,
 The thieving Alley, nay, the righteous Court,

F

From

From BERTIE's, ALMACK's, ARTHUR's, and the Nest
Where JUDAH's Ferrets earth with CHARLES unblest;—
From these and all the Garbage of the great,
At Honour's, Freedom's, Virtue's Call—retreat!

Has the fair Vale, where REST, conceal'd in Flowers,
Lies in Sweet Ambush for thy careless Hours,
The Breeze, that, balmy Fragrance to infuse,
Bathes it's soft Wing in Aromatic Dews,
The Stream, to soothe thine Ear, to cool thy Breast,
That mildly murmurs from it's crystal Rest;—
Have these less Charms to win, less Power to please,
Than Haunts of Rapine, Harbours of Disease?

Will no kind Slumbers o'er thine Eyelids creep,
Save where the fullen Watchman growls at Sleep?

Does

THE COUNTRY JUSTICE.

23

Does Morn no sweeter, purer Breath diffuse
Than steams thro' Alleys from the Lungs of Jews?
And is thy Water, pent in putrid Wood,
BETHESDA-like, when troubled *only* good?

Is it thy Passion LINLEY's Voice to hear,
And has no Mountain-Lark detain'd thine Ear?
Song marks alone the Tribes of Airy Wing;
For, trust Me, Man was never meant to sing:
And all his Mimic Organs e'er exprest,
Was but an imitative Howl at best.

Is it on GARRICK's Attitude you doat?
See on the pointed Cliff yon lordly Goat!
Like LEAR's, his Beard descends in graceful Snow,
And wild He looks upon the World below.

Superior

Superior *here* the Scene in every Part!
 Here reigns great Nature, and there little Art!
 Here let thy Life assume a nobler Plan,
 To Nature faithful, and the Friend of Man!

Unnumber'd Objects ask thy honest Care,
 Beside the Orphan's Tear, the Widow's Prayer.
 Far as thy Power can save, thy Bounty bless,
 Unnumber'd Evils call for thy Redress.

See'st Thou afar yon solitary Thorn,
 Whose aged *Limbs* the Heath's wild Winds have torn?
 While yet to cheer the homeward Shepherd's Eye,
 A *few* seem straggling in the Evening Sky!
 Not many Suns have hastened down the Day,
 Or blushing Moons immers'd in Clouds their Way,

Since

Since there a Scene, that stain'd their sacred Light,
With Horror stopp'd a Felon in his Flight;
A Babe just born that Signs of Life exprest,
Lay naked o'er the Mother's lifeless Breast.
The pitying Robber, conscious that, pursued,
He had no Time to waste, yet stood and view'd;
To the next Cot the trembling Infant bore,
And gave a Part of what He stole before;
Nor known to Him the Wretches were, nor dear,
He felt as Man, and dropp'd a human Tear.

Far other Treatment She who breathless lay,
Found from a viler Animal of Prey.

Worn with long Toil on many a painful Road,
That Toil increas'd by Nature's growing Load,

G

When

When Evening brought the friendly Hour of Rest,
 And all the Mother throng'd about her Breast,
 The Russian Officer oppos'd her Stay,
 And, cruel, bore her in her Pangs away,
 So far beyond the Town's last Limits drove,
 That to return were hopeless, had She strove.
 Abandon'd there — with Famine, Pain and Cold,
 And Anguish, She expir'd — the rest I've told.

“ Now *let* Me swear—For, by my Soul's last Sigh,
 “ That Thief shall live, that Overseer shall die.”

Too late!—His Life the generous Robber paid,
 Lost by that Pity which his Steps delay'd !
 No Soul-discerning MANSFIELD fate to hear,
 No HERTFORD bore his Prayer to Mercy's Ear ;

No

THE COUNTRY JUSTICE.

27

No liberal Justice first assign'd the Gaol,
Or urg'd, as CAMPLIN would have urg'd his Tale.

The living Object of thy honest Rage,
Old in Parochial Crimes, and *steel'd* with Age,
The grave Church-warden!—Unabash'd He bears
Weekly to Church his Book of wicked Prayers.
And pours, with all the Blasphemy of Praise,
His creeping Soul in Sternhold's creeping Lays!

END OF THE SECOND PART.

ADVERTISEMENT.

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A P O E M.

By One of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, for
the Country of *Somerset.*

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